

[REDACTED] TOP SECRET

Comas-D-26  
8 AUG 1963  
series

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WORKING PAPER

SUBJECT: Classification of Overhead Reconnaissance  
Target Lists

1. The United States Government has not admitted at the  
SECRET level that it is engaged in an overflight reconnaissance program  
of any foreign area other than Cuba. [REDACTED]

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2. Any target or list of targets for overflight reconnaissance  
on any areas except for U-2 coverage of Cuba and China, which is issued by  
the United States Government must protect our programs at the proper  
codeword classifications. Issuance of a list at the SECRET level is a  
violation of the above previously indicated position in any instance where  
either the nature of the targets or their frequent updating indicates an  
overflight reconnaissance program. Any publication which appears in  
series and shows changes in the overhead reconnaissance target list  
invites a conclusion that intelligence has been gained by some means  
(not necessarily reconnaissance, but not excluding reconnaissance) when  
it includes frequent and well-based additions, deletions or changes  
in priority. At a minimum to those privy to all forms of collection  
excepting overflight reconnaissance, it almost certainly points to the

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existence of such reconnaissance. Such speculation would also point to satellite reconnaissance insofar as any such individual were to take note of the guarded information published about the majority of U. S. satellite launch activities. In this connection reference is made to sanitization and downgrading regulations. Both of these recognized the need for release of material to the SECRET level but also paid heed to the question of timeliness--meaning not too soon-- and on the availability of a cover story.

3. Because of the foregoing reasoning, it is deemed that the security of the United States programs designed for the reconnaissance of denied areas will definitely be jeopardized by the publication of COMOR target lists at the SECRET level.

Briefing Note for Chairman, COMOR:

A lesser hazard is represented in the monthly updating of the PROL. Even though COMOR numbers may not be cited, the number of changes made to Sino-Soviet bloc targets each month indicate successful intelligence collection way beyond the capacity of non-overhead reconnaissance sources.

*by note to*



*+ SA/OSAT files*

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